

## Do Palestinians Exists, or Don't They? That's The Question?

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**BASED On Declassified Israeli Documents & Personal Diaries**

From the inception of Zionism in the late 19th century and until the present day, the Zionist leaders have insisted that the Palestinians do not exist as either a people or a nation. This blind attitude was adopted to facilitate the usurpation and suppression of Palestinian political, economic, and human rights. As it will be demonstrated from the quotes below, it was often argued by most Zionists that Palestine was an empty and destitute place until Zionists decided to "redeem" it from the desert; and they also argued that the indigenous Palestinian people were backward, primitive, and mostly nomadic who did not deserve any political rights.

### Related Links

- Zionist FAQ: [Isn't it true that Palestine inhabitants were mostly a nomadic people? Why should they have a country of their own?](#)
- [A scanned page from Ben-Gurion's book stating that Jews made up 12% of Palestine's population in 1914](#)
- Zionist FAQ: [Since Palestinians NEVER had a state or distinct culture or language, why should they have a state?](#)
- Zionist FAQ: [Isn't it true that Palestine was a destitute place until Israeli Jews made its desert bloom?](#)

### Famous Quotes

Michael Bar-Zohar (one of [Ben-Gurion](#)'s official biographers) openly admitted that it was a myth that "Palestine was an empty land," and to a certain degree, he managed to explain the evolution of the myth, he wrote:

"Whatever became of the slogan: *A people without a land returns to land without a people?* The simple truth was that Palestine was not an empty land, and the Jews were only a small minority of its population. In the days of the empire building, the Western powers had dismissed *natives* as an inconsequential factor in determining whether or not to settle a territory with immigrants. Even after the [1st] world war, the concept of self-determination . . . was still reserved exclusively for the *developed* world." ([Michael Bar-Zohar](#), p. 45-46)

In describing the following encounter, [Shabtai Teveth](#) (one of Ben-Gurion's official biographers) briefly summarized Ben-Gurion's relations with the Palestinian Arabs, Teveth stated:

"Four days after the constituent meeting, on October 8, 1906, the ten members of the platform committee met in an Arab hostel in [Ramleh](#). For THREE DAYS they sat on stools debating, and at night they slept on mats. An Arab boy brought them coffee in small cups. They left the hostel only to grab an occasional bite in the marketplace. On the first evening, they stole three hours to tour the marketplace of [Ramleh](#) and the ruins of the nearby fortress. Ben-Gurion remarked only on the buildings, ruins, and scenery. He gave no thought to the [Palestinian] Arabs, their problems, their social conditions, or their cultural life. Nor had he yet acquainted himself with the Jewish community in Palestine [which was mostly non-Zionist Orthodox Jews prior to 1920]. In all of Palestine there were [in 1906] 700,000 inhabitants, only 55,000 of whom were Jews, and only 550 of these were [Zionists] pioneers." ([Shabtai Teveth](#), p. 9-10)

This attitude of ignoring the political rights of the Palestinian people was (and still is) the rule among most Zionists. According to Ben-Gurion's biographer, it's not only that Palestinians were the majority in their homeland as early as 1906, it also should be noted that:

- The majority of Palestine's Jews were not citizens of the country, but guests from Tsarist Russia.
- The Jews in Palestinian were mostly Orthodox Jews who made up 7.8% of the total population.
- At the time, the majority of Orthodox Jews were non-Zionist. Actually, the majority were anti-Zionist.
- Zionist pioneers were almost absent in Palestine as of 1906, and constituted only 1% of the total Jewish population in Palestine.

In a similar vein, Walter Laqueur (a major historian of Zionism) gave a different dimension to the status of the early Zionist pioneers in 1914 compared to the Palestinian population. He wrote:

"The Zionist immigrants, as distinct from established Jewish community [religious orthodox], numbered no more than 35,000-40,000 in 1914, of whom only one-third lived in agricultural settlements. While Arab spokesmen protested against Jewish immigration, Jewish observers noted with concern that the annual natural increase of the [Palestinian] Arab population was about as big as the total number of Jews who had settled with so much effort and sacrifice on the land over a period of forty years." ([A History of Zionism](#), p. 213)

In October 1882 Ben-Yehuda and Yehiel Michal Pines, two of the earliest Zionist pioneers in Palestine, wrote describing the indigenous Palestinians:

". . . There are now only five hundred thousand Arabs, who are not very strong, and from whom we shall easily take away the country if only we do it through stratagems [and] without drawing upon us their hostility before we become the strong and populous ones." ([Righteous Victims](#), p. 49)

In 1891 [Ahad Ha'Am](#) opened many Jewish eyes to the fact the Palestine was not empty, but populated with its indigenous people when he wrote:

"We abroad are used to believe the Eretz Yisrael is now almost totally desolate, a desert that is not sowed .... But in truth that is not the case. Throughout the country it is difficult to find fields that are not sowed. Only sand dunes and stony mountains .... are not cultivated." ([Righteous Victims](#), p. 42)

[Israel Zangwill](#), who had visited Palestine in 1897 and came face-to-face with the demographic reality. He stated in 1905 in a speech to a Zionist group in Manchester that:

"Palestine proper has already its inhabitants. The pashalik of Jerusalem is already twice as thickly populated as the United States, having fifty-two souls to the square mile, and not 25% of them Jews ..... [We] must be prepared either to drive out by the sword the [Arab] tribes in possession as our forefathers did or to grapple with the problem of a large alien population, mostly Mohammedan and accustomed for centuries to despise us." ([Expulsion Of The Palestinians](#), p. 7- 10, and [Righteous Victims](#), p. 140)

[Arthur Ruppin](#) wrote in 1913:

"Land is the most necessary thing for establishing roots in Palestine. Since there are hardly any more arable unsettled lands. . . . we are bound in each case. . . to remove the peasants who cultivate the land." ([Righteous Victims](#), p. 61)

It is important to point out that Zionism (as early as 1908 and until the present day) always prophesized that the "Promised Land" had been empty of any people, and it had been waiting for over 2,000 years for Zionist Jews to REDEEM it, [click here](#) to read more about the subject.

In 1891 Ahad Ha'Am similarly wrote of the Palestinians:

"If a time comes when our people in Palestine develop so that, in small or great measure, they push out the native inhabitants, these will not give up their place easily." (Righteous Victims, p. 49)

Soon after the first Zionist Congress in 1897, Basel (Switzerland), a Zionist delegation was sent to Palestine for a fact finding mission and to explore the viability of settling Palestine with European Jewry. The delegation replied back from Palestine with a cable:

"The bride is beautiful, but she is married to another man." (Iron Wall, p. 3)

On March 1, 1899 Yosef Diya al-Khalidi (from the renowned Jerusalem family) wrote in a letter to Theodor Herzl explaining that Zionism in practice entails the dispossession and the displacement of the Palestinian people, he wrote:

"It is necessary, therefore, for the peace of the Jews in [the Ottoman Empire] that the Zionist Movement . . . stop. . . Good lord, the world is vast enough, there are still uninhabited countries where one could settle millions of poor Jews who may perhaps become happy there and one day constitute a nation. . . . In the name of God, let Palestine be left in peace." Herzl responded that Zionists do not intend on dispossession and displacing the Palestinians, on the contrary, he stated the Jews will bring to Palestine ONLY material benefits? (Righteous Victims, p. 37)

Moshe Smilansky wrote in *Hapoel Hatzair* in the spring edition of 1908:

"Either the Land of Israel of Israel belongs in the national sense to those Arabs who settled there in recent years [before 1908], and then we have no place there and we must say explicitly: The land of our fathers is lost to us. [Or] if the land of Israel belongs to us, the the Jewish people, then our national interests come before all else. . . it is not possible for one country to serve as the homeland of two peoples." (Righteous Victims, p. 58)

Note that even when the Zionist presence in Palestine was negligible in 1908, they still looked at the Palestinian people as " recent immigrants". Ironically, many Zionists still propagate this myth to this date.

The socialist Zionist Hahman Syrkin, the ideological founder of Socialist Zionism, proposed in a pamphlet, titled "The Jewish Question and the Socialist Jewish State" published in 1898 , that:

"Palestine is thinly populated, in which the Jews constituted today 10 percent of the population, must be evacuated for the Jews." (Expulsion Of The Palestinians, p. 7)

In March 1911, 150 Palestinian notables cabled the Turkish parliament protesting land sales to Zionist Jews. The governor of Jerusalem, Azmi Bey, responded:

"We are not xenophobes; we welcome all strangers. We are not anti-Semites; we value the economic superiority of the Jews. But no nation, no government could open its arms to groups. . . . aiming to take Palestine from us." (Righteous Victims, p. 62)

Moshe Sharett, the first Israeli foreign minister, wrote in 1914:

We have forgotten that we have not come to an empty land to inherit it, but we have come to conquer a country from people inhabiting it, that governs it by the virtue of its language and savage culture ..... Recently there has been appearing in our newspapers the clarification about "the mutual misunderstanding" between us and the Arabs, about "common interests" [and] about "the possibility of unity and peace between two fraternal peoples." ..... [But] we must not allow ourselves to be deluded by such illusive hopes ..... for if we ceases to look upon our land, the Land of Israel, as ours

alone and we allow a partner into our estate- all content and meaning will be lost to our enterprise. ([Righteous Victims](#), p. 91)

In 1905 during the Zionist Congress convention at Bessel (Switzerland) a Palestinian Jew, Yitzhak Epstein 1862-1943, delivered a lecture about the "Arab question" :

"Among the difficult questions connected to the idea of the renaissance of our people on its soil there is one which is equal to all others: the question of our relations with the Arabs. . . . We have FORGOTTEN one small matter: There is in our beloved land an entire nation, which has occupied it for hundreds of years and has never thought to leave it. . . .

We are making a GREAT psychological error with regard to a great, assertive, and jealous people. While we feel a deep love for the land of our forefathers, we forgot that the nation who lives in it today has a sensitive heart and loving soul. The Arab, like every man, is tied to his native land with strong bonds." ([Righteous Victims](#), p. 57)

[Ahad Ha'Am](#) returned to the Arab problem ... in February 1914 ... and he also stated:

" [the Zionists] wax angry towards those who remind them that there is still another people in Eretz Yisrael that has been living there and does not intend at all to leave its place. In a future when this ILLUSION will have been torn from their hearts and they will look with open eyes upon the reality as it is, they will certainly understand how important this question is and how great our duty to work for its solution." ([UN: The Origins And Evolution Of Palestine Problem](#), section II) But [Ahad Ha'Am](#)'s plea went unheeded as political Zionism set about to realize its goal of a Jewish State.

As early as 1914, [Ben-Gurion](#) secretly admitted the existence of Palestinian nationalism, at least among the working masses. He explained that Palestinians hatred to Zionism was based of their fear of being dispossessed. Ben-Gurion analyzed this hatred and stated:

"this hatred originates with the [Palestinian] Arab workers in Jewish settlements. Like any worker, the [Palestinian] Arab worker detests his taskmaster and exploiter. But because this class conflict overlaps a national difference between farmers and workers, this hatred takes a national form. Indeed, the national overwhelms the class aspect of the conflict in the minds of the [Palestinian] Arab working masses, and inflames an intense hatred toward the Jews." ([Shabtai Teveth](#), p. 18-19)

In 1914, [Chaim Weizmann](#) attempted to lay down the foundations of realizing Zionism, and begins by asserting that Palestine is empty and that its current inhabitants have no say in its fate. He stated:

"In its initial stage, Zionism was conceived by its pioneers as a movement wholly depending on mechanical factors: there is a country which happens to be called Palestine, a country without people, and, on the other hand, there exists the Jewish people, and it has no country. What else is necessary, then, than to fit the gem into the ring, to unite this people with this country? The owners of the country [the Ottoman Turks] must, therefore, be persuaded and conceived that this marriage is advantageous, not only for the [Jewish] people and for the country, but also for themselves." ([Expulsion Of The Palestinians](#), p. 6)

Just prior to the British conquest of Palestine, [Chaim Weizmann](#) wrote describing Palestinian people as:

"the rocks of Judea, as obstacles that had to be cleared on a difficult path." ([Expulsion Of The Palestinians](#), p. 17)

In 1913 the renowned Palestinian historian [Aref al-'Aref](#) wrote an article predicting the outcome of realizing Zionism:

"[land sale was enabling] the Zionists [to] gain mastery over our country, village by village, town by town; tomorrow the whole of Jerusalem will be sold and then Palestine in its entirety." ([Righteous](#)

### Victims, p. 64)

In 1915 Herbert Samuel (who was an influential Jewish British official who later became one of the earliest advocates of the [Balfour Declaration](#) and the first British Mandate High commissioner to Palestine in 1920) wrote :

"[A state in which 90,000 or 100,000 Jewish inhabitants [would rule over] 400,000 or 500,000 Mohammedans of Arab race. . . might vanish in a series of squalid conflicts with the [Palestinian] Arab population." ([Righteous Victims](#), p. 72)

The actual demographics picture for Palestine in 1914 was: 657,000 Muslim Arabs, 81,000 Christian Arabs, and 59,000 Jews, [click here](#) for details.

In an article published by [Ben-Gurion](#) in 1918, titled "The Rights of the Jews and others in Palestine," he conceded that the Palestinian Arabs have the same rights as Jews. The Palestinians had such rights, as stemming from their history since they had inhabited the land "for hundreds of years". He stated in the article:

"Palestine is not an empty country . . . on no account must we injure the rights of the inhabitants." Ben-Gurion often returned to this point, emphasizing that Palestinian Arabs had "the full right" to an independent economic, cultural, and communal life, but not political. ([Shabtai Teveth](#), p. 37-38)

But [Ben-Gurion](#) set limits. The Palestinian people were incapable by themselves of developing Palestine, and they had no right to stand in the way of the Jews. He argued in 1918, that Jews' rights sprang not from the past but from the future, and in 1924 he declared:

"We do not recognize the right of the [Palestinian] Arabs to rule the country, since Palestine is still undeveloped and awaits its builders." In 1928 he pronounced that "the [Palestinian] Arabs have no right to close the country to us [Jews]. What right do they have to the Negev desert, which is uninhabited?"; and in 1930, "The [Palestinian] Arabs have no right to the Jordan river, and no right to prevent the construction of a power plant [by a Jewish concern]. They have a right only to that which they have created and to their homes." ([Shabtai Teveth](#), p. 38)

In other words, the Palestinian people are entitled to no political rights, and if they have any other rights, these are confined to their places of residence. Ironically, this statement was written when the Palestinian people made up the majority of the population, well over 85%.

In 1918 [Chaim Weizmann](#) denied the existence of an Arab nation in Palestine and portrayed them as ignorant and naive in a letter to a colleague of his:

"The poor ignorant fellah [Arabic for peasant] does not worry about politics, but when he is told repeatedly by people in whom he has confidence that his livelihood is in danger of being taken away from him by us, he becomes our mortal enemy. . . The Arab is primitive and believes what he is told." ([One Palestine Complete](#), p. 109)

On November 2, 1918, at the Balfour day parade in Jewish Jerusalem, Musa Kathim al-Husseini, Jerusalem's mayor at the time, handed the British governor of Palestine, Storrs, a petition from more than 100 Palestinian notables which stated:

"We have noticed yesterday a large crowd of Jews carrying banners and over-running the streets shouting words which hurt the feeling and wound the soul. They [Zionist Jews] pretend with open voice that Palestine, which is the Holy Land of our fathers and the graveyard of our ancestors, which has been inhabited by the Arabs for long ages, who loved it and died in defending it, is now a national home for them." ([Righteous Victims](#), p. 90)

In 1920, Israel Zangwill clearly acknowledged the existence of Palestinians, but not as a people since they were not exploiting Palestine's resources. He said:

"If the Lord Shaftesbury was literally inexact in describing Palestine as a country without a people, he was essentially correct, for there is no Arab people living in intimate fusion with the country, utilizing its resources and stamping it with a characteristic impress: there is at best an Arab encampment." (Expulsion Of The Palestinians, p. 6)

Privately, many Zionist leaders acknowledged that Zionism was the primary motive behind the Palestinian nationalist movement, however, publicly they always stated that the movement was organized by a few who did not represent the political aims of the ordinary Palestinian. Kalvaryski, a Zionist Official, put it in May 1921:

"It is pointless to consider this [referring to the Palestinian national movement] a question only of effendis [land owners] . . . This may be fine as a tactic, but, between ourselves, we should realize that we have to reckon with an [Palestinian] Arab national movement. We ourselves---our own [movement]---are speeding the development of the [Palestinian] Arab movement." (Righteous Victims, p. 104)

In July 1922, after the Palestinian Arab commercial strike, Ben-Gurion acknowledged privately that a Palestinian national movement is evolving. He wrote in his diary:

"The success of the [Palestinian] Arabs in organizing the closure of shops shows that we are dealing here with a national movement. For the [Palestinian] Arabs, this is an important education step." (Shabtai Teveth, p. 80)

Similarly in 1929, he also wrote about the Palestinian political national movement:

"It is true that the Arab national movement has no positive content. The leaders of the movement are unconcerned with betterment of the people and provision of their essential needs. They do not aid the fellah; to the contrary, the leaders suck his blood, and exploit the popular awakening for private gain. But we err if we measure the [Palestinian] Arabs and their movement by our standards. Every people is worthy of its national movement. The obvious characteristic of a political movement is that it knows how to mobilize the masses. From this prospective there is no doubt that we are facing a political movement, and we should not underestimate it."

"A national movement mobilizes masses, and that is the main thing. The [Palestinian] Arab is not one of revival, and its moral value is dubious. But in a political sense, this is a national movement." (Shabtai Teveth, p. 83)

In 1923, Ze'ev Jabotinsky wrote of how Palestinians really felt about their attachment to Palestine:

"They look upon Palestine with the same instinctive love and true favor that Aztec looked upon Mexico or any Sioux looked upon his prairie. Palestine will remain for the Palestinians not a borderland, but their birthplace, the center and basis of their own national existence." (Righteous Victims, p. 36)

Similarly, Ze'ev Jabotinsky also wrote in 1923:

"The Arabs loved their country as much as the Jews did. Instinctively, they understood Zionist aspirations very well, and their decision to resist them was only natural .... There was not misunderstanding between Jew and Arab, but a natural conflict. .... No Agreement was possible with the Palestinian Arab; they would accept Zionism only when they found themselves up against an 'iron wall,' when they realize they had no alternative but to accept Jewish settlement." (America And The Founding Of Israel, p. 90)

In 1926 Ze'ev Jabotinsky wrote of the national struggle between the two conflicting, but justified Jewish and Palestinian national movements:

"The tragedy lies in the fact that there is a collision here between two truths ..... But our justice is greater. The Arabs is culturally backward , but his instinctive patriotism is just as pure and noble as our own; it can not be bought, it can only be curbed ... *force majeure.*" (Righteous Victims, p. 108)

In the early 1930's, Ben-Gurion finally admitted the mistake of trying to bribe or buy the Palestinian national movement, rather than working with it, he stated in a Mapai forum:

"We have erred for ten years now . . . the crux is not cooperation with the English, but with the [Palestinian] Arabs." By this he meant not merely a relationship of friendship and mutual aid, but political cooperation, which he called the "cornerstone" of the "Arab-Jewish-English rule in Palestine. Let's not deceive ourselves and think that when we approach the [Palestinian] Arabs and tell them 'We'll build schools and better your economic conditions,' that we have succeeded. Let's not think that the [Palestinian] Arabs by nature are different from us." In the heat of the argument, Ben-Gurion said to one of his critics and asked: "Do you think that, by extending economic favors to the [Palestinian] Arabs, you can make them forget their political rights in Palestine?" Did Mapai believe that by aiding the Palestinian Arabs to secure decent housing and grow bumper crops they could persuade the Palestinian Arabs to regard themselves "as complete strangers in the land which is theirs?" (Shabtai Teveth, p. 114)

As the number of Palestinian Jews (*Yishuv*) doubled between 1931-1935, the Palestinian people became threatened with being dispossessed, with Jews becoming their masters. The Palestinian political movement was becoming more vocal and organized, which surprised Ben-Gurion. In his opinion, the demonstrations represented a "turning point" important enough to warrant Zionist concern. As he told Mapai comrades:

". . . they [referring to Palestinians] showed new power and remarkable discipline. Many of them were killed . . . this time not murderers and rioters, but political demonstrators. Despite the tremendous unrest, the order not to harm Jews was obeyed. This shows exceptional political discipline. There is no doubt that these events will leave a profound imprint on the [Palestinian] Arab movement. This time we have seen a political movement which must evoke respect of the world. (Shabtai Teveth, p. 126)

On May 27, 1931, Ben-Gurion recognized that the "Arab question" is a

"tragic question of fate" that arose only as a consequence of Zionism, and so was a "question of Zionist fulfilment in the light of Arab reality." In other words, this was a Zionist rather than an Arab question, posed to Zionists who were perplexed about how they could fulfill their aspirations in a land already inhabited by a Palestinian Arab majority. (Shabtai Teveth, p. xii, Preface)

In a book Ben-Gurion published in 1931 (titled: *We and Our Neighbors*), he admitted that Palestinian Arabs had the same rights as Jews to exist in Palestine. He stated:

"The Arab community in Palestine is an organic, inseparable part of the landscape. It is embedded in the country. The [Palestinian] Arabs work the land, and will remain." Ben-Gurion even held that the Palestinian Arabs had full rights in Palestine, "since the only right by which a people can claim to possess a land indefinitely is the right conferred by willingness to work." They had the same opportunity to establish that right as the Zionists did. (Shabtai Teveth, p. 5-6)

Ben-Gurion was impressed Izz al-Din al-Kassam's heroism in the mid 1930s, and he predicted Kassam's example would have a far-reaching effect on the Palestinian national movement. Ben-Gurion stated two weeks after Kassam's fateful battle with the British occupation nearby Ya'bad-Jinin:

"This is the event's importance. We would have educated our youth without Tel-Hai [an encounter with Palestinians in the Galilee in the early 1920s], because we have other important values, but the [Palestinian] Arab organizers have had less to work with. The [Palestinian] Arabs have no respect for any leader. They know that every single one is prepared to sell out the Arab people for his personal gain, and so the Arabs have no self-esteem. Now, for the first time, the [Palestinian] Arabs have seen someone offer his life for the cause. This will give the [Palestinian] Arabs the moral strength which they lack."

Ben-Gurion also stressed that

"this is not Nashashibi and not the Mufti. This is not the motivation out of career or greed. In Shaykh Qassam, we have a fanatic figure prepared to sacrifice his life in martyrdom. Now there are not one but dozens, hundreds, if not thousands like him. And the Arab people stand behind them." (Shabtai Teveth, p. 126)

After Ben-Gurion's encounter with George Antonius in May 1936, he was willing to concede the existence of a conflict, between the Palestinian Arabs and Jewish nationalism, for the first time in public. He stated:

"There is a conflict, a great conflict." not in the economic but the political realm. "There is fundamental conflict. We and they want the same thing: We both want Palestine. And that is the fundamental conflict." (Shabtai Teveth, p. 166)

"I now say something which contradicts the theory which I once had on this question. At one time, I thought an agreement [with Palestinians] was possible." Ben-Gurion attached some reservation to this statement. A settlement might be possible between both peoples in the widest sense, between the entire "Jewish people" and the entire Arab people. But such an agreement could be achieved "once they despair of preventing a Jewish Palestine." (Shabtai Teveth, p. 171)

It should be noted that this statement signaled a shift in Ben-Gurion's mind set. Ironically, his conclusion is in a complete agreement with Ze'ev Jabotinsky's IRON WALL doctrine. When Jabotinsky first came out with his famous doctrine in the early 1920s, Ben-Gurion and many other Zionists in the Labor movement branded him as a "racist". As the previous quote demonstrates, Ben-Gurion finally recognized that Zionism had to rely on the IRON WALL doctrine for it to become a reality. Unfortunately for the Palestinian people, according to Ben-Gurion that was a matter of "life or death" for Zionism and Jews.

Over no issue was the conflict so severe as the question of immigration:

"Arab leaders see no value in the economic dimension of the country's development, and while they will concede that our immigration has brought material blessings to Palestine [where exclusively Jewish labor was always the rule], they nevertheless contend---and from the [Palestinian] Arab point of view, they are right-- that they want neither the honey nor the bee sting." (Shabtai Teveth, p. 166)

Soon after the outbreak of the first Intifada in 1936, Ben-Gurion stated in a meeting with his Mapai party:

" .... the [Palestinian Arabs] fear is not of losing land, but of losing the homeland of the Arab people, which others want to turn into the homeland of the Jewish people. The [Palestinian] Arab is fighting a war that cannot be ignored. He goes out on strike, he is killed, he makes great sacrifices." (Expulsion Of The Palestinians, p. 18)

On the other hand, he denied the Palestinian any political rights. As a justification, Ben-Gurion stated:

"There is no conflict between Jewish and Arab nationalism because the Jewish nation is not in Palestine and the Palestinians are not a nation." (Expulsion Of The Palestinians, p. 19)

A few months before the peace conference convened at Versailles in 1919, Ben-Gurion saw the future Jewish and Palestinian Arabs relations as follows:

"Everybody sees the problem in the relations between the Jews and the [Palestinian] Arabs. But not everybody sees that there's no solution to it. There is no solution! . . . The conflict between the interests of the Jews and the interests of the [Palestinian] Arabs in Palestine cannot be resolved by sophisms. I don't know any Arabs who would agree to Palestine being ours---even if we learn Arabic . . . and I have no need to learn Arabic. On the other hand, I don't see why 'Mustafa' should learn Hebrew. . . . There's a national question here. We want the country to be ours. The Arabs want the country to be theirs." (One Palestine Complete, p. 116)

In the context of the 1929 disturbance, Ben Gurion spoke of the emerging Palestinian nationalism and the main goal of Zionism (where Palestine's population becomes a "Jewish majority") to the secretariat of the major Zionist groupings. He said:

"The debate as to whether or not an Arab national movement exists is a pointless verbal exercise; the main thing for us is that the movement attracts the masses. We do not regard it as a resurgence movement and its moral worth is dubious. But politically speaking it is a national movement . . . . The Arab must not and cannot be a Zionist. He could never wish the Jews to become a majority. This is the true antagonism between us and the Arabs. We both want to be the majority." (Expulsion Of The Palestinians, p. 18)

Since the Jews in Palestine (*Yishuv*) could not become a majority as of 1948 ([click here](#) for Palestine's demographic map as of 1946), Zionists resorted to compulsory population transfer (Ethnic Cleansing) to solve what they referred to by the "Arab demographic problem". To hide their basic goals and intentions, they have concocted the myth that Palestinians left their homes, farms, and businesses on the orders of their leaders, [click here](#) to read our response to this argument.

In 1930 Arthur Ruppin stated that the dispossession and displacement of the Palestinian Arabs was inevitable if Zionism were to become a reality. He wrote:

"[Palestinian dispossession is inevitable because] land is the vital condition for our settlement in Palestine. But since there is hardly any land which is worth cultivating that is not already being cultivated, it is found that whatever we purchase land and settle it, by necessity its present cultivators are turned away . . . In the future it will be much more difficult to purchase land, as sparsely populated land hardly exists. What remains is densely [Palestinian Arab] populated land." (Expulsion Of The Palestinians, p.11)

Soon after the outbreak of the first Intifada in 1936, Moshe Sharett spoke of how Palestinians really felt about the continued influx of Jewish immigrants:

"Fear is the main factor in [Palestinian] Arab politics. . . . There is no Arab who is not harmed by Jews' entry into Palestine." (Righteous Victims, p. 136)

As the first Intifada erupted in 1936, many Zionists complained that the British Mandate was not doing enough to stop Palestinian resistance (which often was referred to by "terror"). In that regard, Ben-Gurion argued that:

"no government in the world can prevent individual terror. . . when a people is fighting for its land, it is not easy to prevent such acts." Nor did he criticize the British display of leniency: "I see why the government feels the need to show leniency towards the [Palestinian] Arabs . . . it is not easy to suppress a popular movement strictly by the use of force." (Shabtai Teveth, p. 166)

Sporadically, Ben-Gurion **EMPATHIZED** with the Palestinian people. He stated in a letter to Moshe Sharett in 1937:

"Were I an Arab, and Arab with nationalist political consciousness . . . I would rise up against an immigration liable in the future to hand the country and all of its [Palestinian] Arab inhabitants over to Jewish rule. What [Palestinian] Arab cannot do his math and understand what [Jewish] immigration at the rate of 60,000 a year means a Jewish state in all of Palestine." ([Shabtai Teveth](#), p. 171-172)

In February 1937, [Ben-Gurion](#) was on the **BRINK** of a far reaching conclusion, that the Arabs of Palestine were a separate people, distinct from other Arabs and deserving of self-determination. He stated:

"The right which the Arabs in Palestine have is one due to the inhabitants of any country . . . because they live here, and not because they are Arabs . . . The Arab inhabitants of Palestine should enjoy all the rights of citizens and all political rights, not only as individuals, but as a national community, just like the Jews." ([Shabtai Teveth](#), p. 170)

In 1938 [Menachem Ussishkin](#) commented on the partition plan proposed by the British [Peel Commission](#) in 1937:

"We cannot begin the Jewish state with a population of which the [Palestinian] Arabs living on their lands constitute almost half and where the Jews exist on the land in very small numbers and they are all crowded in Tel Aviv and its vicinity .... and the worst is not only the [Palestinian] Arabs here constitute 50 percent or 45 percent but 75 percent of the land is in the hands of the [Palestinian] Arabs. Such a state cannot survive even for half an hour ..... The question is not whether they will be majority or a minority in Parliament. You know that even a small minority could disrupt the whole order of parliamentary life..... therefore I would say to the [Peel] Commission and the government that we would not accept reduced Land of Israel without you giving us the land, on the one hand, and removing the largest number of [Palestinian] Arabs-particularly the peasants- on the other before we come forward to take the reins of government in our lands even provisionally."

([Expulsion Of The Palestinians](#), p. 111-112; see also [Righteous Victims](#), p. 143-144)

In May 1944 (during a closed deliberation) [Ben-Gurion](#) continued to express without restrain his conviction that Arab transfer was inherent in the very conception of Zionism, he said:

"Zionism is a TRANSFER of the Jews. Regarding the TRANSFER of the [Palestinian] Arabs this is much easier than any other TRANSFER. There are Arab states in the vicinity . . . and it is clear that if the [Palestinian] Arabs are removed [to these states] this will improve their condition and not the contrary." ([Expulsion Of The Palestinians](#), p. 159)

In a speech addressing the United Nations Ad Hoc committee on Palestine October 14 1947, Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver (an American Zionist leader) stated:

"There has never been a politically or culturally distinct or distinguishable Arab nation in Palestine. Palestine dropped out of history after the Arab conquest [1,400 years earlier and during the Crusade period] and returned as a separate unit only after the league of nations gave international recognition to a Jewish National home in the country." ([Expulsion Of The Palestinians](#), p. 91)

The Rabbi's statement has lots of truth to it, Palestinian nationalism evolved in response to Zionism and the attempts to bring it to reality via the British sponsored [Balfour Declaration](#). To learn more on the subject, [click here](#).

In a speech addressing the Central Committee of the Histadrut on December 30, 1947, [Ben-Gurion](#) said:

"In the area allocated to the Jewish State there are not more than 520,000 Jews and about 350,000 non-Jews, mostly Arabs. Together with the Jews of Jerusalem, the total population of the Jewish State at the time of its establishment, will be about one million, including almost 40% non-Jews. such a [population] composition does not provide a stable basis for a Jewish State. This

[demographic] fact must be viewed in all its clarity and acuteness. With such a [population] composition, there cannot even be absolute certainty that control will remain in the hands of the Jewish majority .... There can be no stable and strong Jewish state so long as it has a Jewish majority of only 60%." ([Expulsion Of The Palestinians](#), p. 176)

As late as 1947, after almost half a century of tireless and relentless effort, the collective ownership of the Jewish National Fund (which constituted one-half of all Zionists and Jewish land ownership) amounted to a mere 3.5% of Palestine. [Yosef Weitz](#) was in a good position to know that:

"without taking action to TRANSFER [the Palestinian Arab] population, we will not be able to solve our question by [land] buying." ([Expulsion Of The Palestinians](#), 133)

[Yosef Weitz](#) also noted on the same date that the BULK of the cultivable land in the "Jewish state", allotted by UN GA proposed Partition in December 1947, was Palestinian owned. He wrote:

"[most of the land is] not Jewish-owned or even in the category of the state domain whose ownership could be automatically assumed by a successor government. Thus, of 13,500,000 dunums (6,000,000 of which were desert and 7,500,000 dunums of cultivable land) in the Jewish state according to the Partition plan, ONLY 1,500,000 dunums were Jewish owned." ([Expulsion Of The Palestinians](#), p. 183)

In an interview with the the *Sunday Times* Golda Meir, Israel's Prime Minister between 1969-1974, stated in June 1969:

"It is not as though there was a Palestinian people in Palestine considering itself as Palestinian people and we came and threw them out and took their country away from them, they did not exist." ([Iron Wall](#), p. 311)

On 30 July 1973 [Moshe Dayan](#) said to the *Time Magazine*:

"There is no more Palestine. Finished . . ." ([Iron Wall](#), p. 316)

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